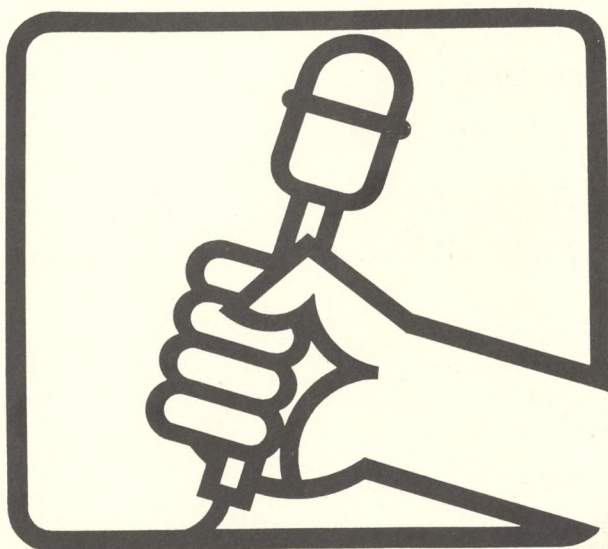


THE
VENTURA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
QUARTERLY



VENTURA COUNTY RADIO

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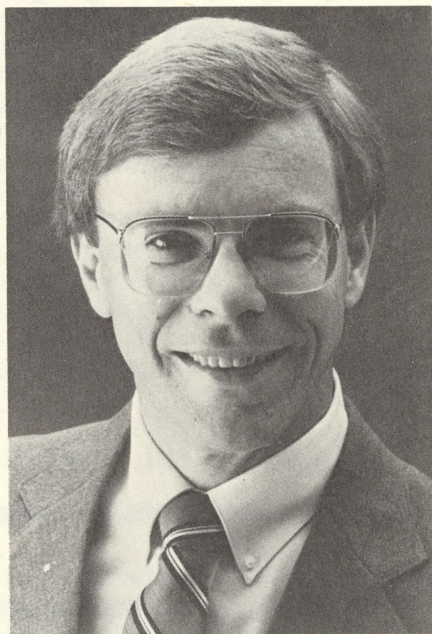
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THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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by the author from the subjects depicted.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

David Loe is the President and General Manager of two Ventura County radio stations: KVEN Newstalk (1450 AM) and country music formatted K-HAY (100.7 FM). He is a co-owner of both stations as well, his partner being veteran broadcaster Robert L. Fox.

David is a native of St. Paul, Minnesota and a graduate of the University of California at Santa Barbara. His degree is in business economics.

Mr. Loe started his broadcasting career in 1969 as a morning disc jockey on a station in Lompoc, California. In 1971, he and his wife, Geri, moved to Ventura County where David took a position with KACY in Oxnard. After three years of selling radio advertising for KACY, he was hired by KVEN/KHAY. David handled various sales and management roles at both stations before becoming General Manager.

He is the past president of Ventura County Radio Broadcasters Association and of the Advertising Club of Ventura County as well. Currently, David is serving on the executive committee of United Way of Ventura County.

THE HISTORY OF RADIO BROADCASTING IN VENTURA COUNTY

by David Loe

*Good evening friends of the Inner Sanctum...
this is your host to welcome you
through the squeaking door...*

In just two minutes that familiar voice will be on-the-air. You quickly dry the last few dinner plates so you can join the family already gathered in the living room.

Sure, the thirties have been tough years in Ventura County — just like in the rest of the nation — but somehow you scraped together the money to buy that Atwater-Kent. It was the nicest they had at Carl's Radio Den over on 5th Street in Oxnard.

With the long-wire antenna they installed for free when they delivered it, it gets all the shows. If it wasn't for Amos and Andy, Fibber McGee, and Edgar Bergen, how could anyone keep smiling during times like these!

It's raining outside and a perfect night for a mystery. The setting is perfect too as only the glow from the radio's dial illuminates the now-eerie living room.

Kids are sprawled on the floor and Dad's in his favorite chair as you walk in. Together you prepare to enter "the inner sanctum."

It was "The Golden Age of Radio," and that spooky voice welcoming Ventura County residents through the squeaking door was coming from a radio station in Salt Lake City or Denver or Los Angeles, not from a local station. There were no Ventura County radio stations! In the thirties, radio broadcasting was done by just a few high-power stations in the biggest cities. So few stations existed that many station's call letters and dial positions were printed by the manufacturer right on the Atwater-Kent's dial.

Actually, there were more local stations on the air in the twenties than in the thirties around America, and the same was true here in Ventura County. Many of these low power early stations were put on the air by stores that sold radio parts in order to draw attention to their principal business.

That was no doubt the motivation of Carl Newcomb, owner of Carl's Radio Den, when he put Oxnard's first radio station on the air in 1926. "Radio Oxnard" was a five-watt station licensed by the government and given the call letters KFYF. For three hours each evening, the transmitter built by Carl's employee, Ted Williams, was fired up. Owners of crystal sets and a lucky few with new electric radios could enjoy their hometown station.



JANE SMITH OF KVVC

Jane Smith is presenting a "lovely pen and pencil set" to Mrs. J. R. Stimmel of Oxnard, Mrs. Stimmel having been declared local winner of the American Bakers Association's recipe contest by KVVC's contest editor (1950).

"Radio Oxnard" lasted only three years. As Ted Williams explained years later, "Radio advertising didn't catch on, and after a few years we gave it up as too much of a financial burden." Ted's career lasted a lot longer than his transmitter, however. Ted Williams eventually bought Carl's Radio Den and during a fifty-year span he manufactured, sold, and repaired radios for residents of Oxnard at the store located at 204 East Fifth Street.

"The Golden Age of Radio" was just about over in 1947 and 1948



FRED HALL OF KVEN

The Topper Night Club (adjacent to present location of County Stationers) is the setting for KVEN's nightly live remote broadcast hosted by Fred Hall (1949).

when radio stations that would stand the test of time started appearing in Ventura County. Three stations came on the air within months of each other. First was KVVC ("K" indicating west of the Mississippi River and "VVC" for "Voice of Ventura County"). The next two stations arrived almost simultaneously, and both selected call letters that indicated their city of license. In Ventura, it was KVEN and in Santa Paula, KSPA.

Fred Hall, a veteran Ventura County broadcaster, recalls the competition of those early days by remembering that KVVC had several months' head start attracting local business to advertise on radio. Advertisers gladly paid \$16 per minute to have their commercials read over the air on KVVC. The owners of KVEN and KSPA were anxious to fill their stations with commercials as soon as they came on the air, too. Suddenly there was more advertising space than there were local advertisers and the prevailing rate crashed down to **\$1.00 per minute.**

Here is a typical broadcast day from the early 1950s on KVEN:

5:00 a.m. - 6:00 a.m.

"Spanish Language Hour"

6:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

"Jack Powell's Morning Circus"

(Personalities, fun, music, news)

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

"The Mort Werner Show"

(One of the owners played piano, sang and interviewed guests.)

10:00 a.m. - 12 noon

"The Jane Smith Show"

(Women's talk show with guests)

12:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Disc Jockey Shows

Fred Hall (Pop music & Big Bands)

Frank Haines

(Big Bands & Jazz; later, Rock and Roll)

Dana Marble

(Featuring remote broadcasts)



JACK POWELL OF KVEN

Hilford House Party, "Ventura's most popular radio show," was originated and emceed by Jack Powell, here presenting a birthday orchid to Mrs. Emma Devern of Meiners Oaks. The hilarity undoubtedly developed from Mrs. Devern's claim to be but fifteen years of age. From a contemporary advertisement: "Ventura women — and men, too if they wish — are urged to attend and take part in the colorful House Party which is broadcast directly from the stage of the American Legion clubhouse every Friday afternoon. Admission, of course, is free" (1950).



MORE HILTON HOUSE
SHENANIGANS

Among the many popular stunts at Hilford House Party was the tea-sipping contest. Pictured here with emcee Powell are: Mrs. M. A. Tait of Meiners Oaks, Mrs. Gertrude Temple of Ventura (the winner), Mrs. Nell Caulk of Oxnard and Mrs. Winnie Lester of Ventura.

Unlike today's radio stations that are clearly differentiated from each other by the music they play, those early local stations sounded quite similar. All of them played a variety of music, trying to appeal to as broad a segment of the radio audience as possible.

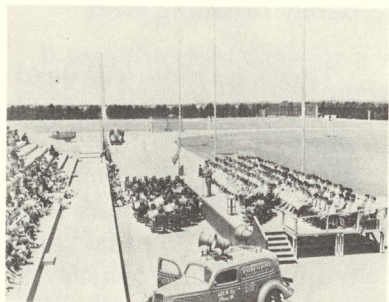
With advertising rates depressed by competition and all three stations programming a little bit of everything, it was tough financially for the local stations. One station had to emerge as the leader. According to the early broadcasters, it was clearly KVEN. They did so by attracting personalities such as Jack Powell and Jane Smith



*JOHNSON'S RADIO IN OXNARD
1946*

even greater difficulty for these new radio stations. A competitive force that threatened the very life of the entire medium of radio — a new-fangled gadget called television.

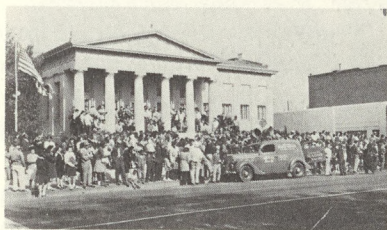
It was introduced to Ventura County by Johnson's Radio in Oxnard. Owners Ray and Vivian Johnson had been in the radio business since the mid-thirties, specializing in putting car radios in folks' automobiles (something Detroit hadn't quite seen the potential of at the time).



*JOHNSON'S RADIO
SERVICE CAR
Sound amplification for Wilson
Grammar School Graduation, 1946*

(both had worked at KVVU). More importantly, however, they outdid their competition by adding a local news department which neither of the other stations had. For the first time in Ventura County, there was a source of information other than the printed word.

At this time, something appeared on the horizon that would cause



*JOHNSON'S RADIO
SERVICE CAR
Sound Amplification for Joe Louis's
visit to Oxnard's Carnegie Building
1946*

Demonstrating TV as something that belonged in your living room in the late 1940s was a real challenge. The screen was all of nine inches and it had to be viewed in total darkness. Then to get a decent picture in Ventura County, you needed an antenna perched on a fifty-foot tower!

The Johnsons saw the business potential of this new entertainment

medium and weren't about to let the limitations stop them. They added an extra room, a "viewing room," to their home. When customers came to their store to inquire about television, an invitation to the house was extended for that evening's performance. Nobody turned down an opportunity to see one of the few sets in town. Six nights a week they came, up to ten people, crowded around the tiny screen in the dark. Vivian Johnson recollects, "Of course we had a lot of lookers and there weren't all that many buyers at that time." Local residents surely liked the looking though. "We would hardly get through dinner before they'd be knocking at the door...and they'd stay all evening."

Television proved to be profitable for the Johnsons. In 1987, Johnson's Radio & Television celebrated its fiftieth anniversary and Ray and Vivian finally decided to retire and leave the operation of their successful business to their children.

Business was far from profitable in the early fifties for the local radio stations, however, as the public's fascination with TV took them away from their radios. KVVC was operating under bankruptcy protection, KSPA was suffering severe financial hardship, and even high-flying KVEN was barely breaking even.



THE JOHNSON FAMILY
OXNARD'S TELEVISION HOSTS
Vivian and Charles Johnson with Bruce (3 years), Charles (9 years), Ruth (2 years).

They said radio was dead in America! Who would want to listen anymore without seeing a picture? The network dramas and comedies left radio and reappeared on television. It was a bleak time for anyone

who believed in radio; "The Golden Age of Radio" was definitely over. Seven years passed before anyone even considered putting another radio station on the air in Ventura County.

What saved radio? The answer can be related in two words: transistors and Elvis. The invention of the transistor allowed radios to become small and portable, thus allowing radio to become the personal medium it is today. Everybody has his own radio and his own radio station. Instead of families sitting around the radio listening together, each member has a personal "Walkman." Meanwhile, Elvis unleashed Rock and Roll upon the world. It proved to be the dynamic new force in music that helped promote a radio station for everyone, especially the kids.

By 1955 radio was making a comeback — and with a new look: specialized formats. Instead of playing a little bit of everything, stations were all Country and Western or "Good Music" (also known as "Middle of the Road"), or even all Rock and Roll.

It was the right time for a young Seabee named Paul Schneider to invest his life savings in a radio station for the city of Oxnard. KOXR (for "Oxnard Radio") went on the air in 1955. In its opening-day broadcast, Chamber of Commerce Manager Bob Termain declared,

"In this day of fast transportation and fast communication, no city is a real city without its own radio station." Oxnard, silent on the airwaves since 1929, was "for real" again.

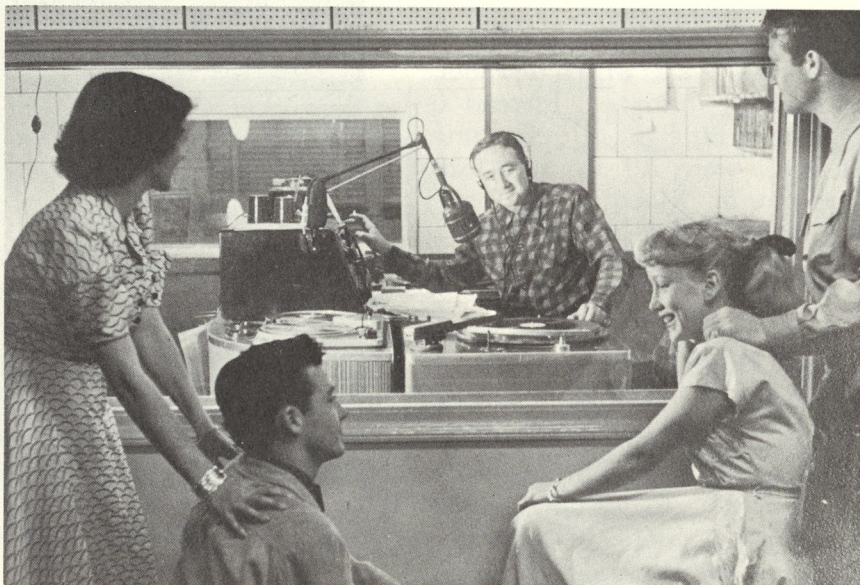


PAUL SCHNEIDER OF KOXR

Schneider was tempted to program his new station as a "Rocker," but advertiser objection to the "terrible music of Elvis Presley" convinced him to be a "Good Music" station. He now feels he made a terrible mistake by refusing to play Elvis's songs. Station KACY, which signed on a few years later, did not repeat the mistake and seized the opportunity overlooked by all the other local stations.

KACY was licensed to the city of Port Hueneme with call letters picked just because "Casey" sounded good on the air. It didn't take long for KACY to become the kid's radio station in Ventura County. It seemed as though every teenager in the area was listening, usually at a volume level deemed objectionable by parents. The station slogan was "The Boss of the Beach." KACY was also "the boss" of local radio. Only KVEN with its strong local news programming could come close to competing.

So successful was "the mighty KACY" that in the 1960s KVVC decided to do battle — head to head — duplicating KACY's rock



FRED HALL AT KVEN STUDIOS

Fans from Ventura High School observe Fred Hall at the control board of the original KVEN studios, Pierpont Bay, Ventura (1949).

format. KVVC changed its call letters to KUDU. For years the battle raged, with exotic prizes offered by both stations to entice listeners to be loyal. In the end KACY, now with a block-buster 50,000 watt signal, prevailed while KUDU changed call letters again to try its hand at Country and Western as KBBQ.

But once again, new technology loomed on the horizon, technology that would change the rules of the game — so much so that eventually even the mighty KACY would meet its demise. It was radio in high fidelity. It was FM!

Oxnard's Paul Schneider brought FM to Ventura County. In September of 1958, he put KPMJ-FM (for Paul and Mary Jane, his wife) on the air. It was Paul's engineering background and thus his fascination with high fidelity transmission that encouraged him to be a pioneer. It certainly wasn't his business sense; as he says today, "This was really a very disappointing period. You would mention FM to people and they would say "What's that?" Not only Schneider, but most early FM broadcasters discovered that not enough of the public was interested in buying the new FM radios.

Many of these pioneering station owners went broke. The ones who survived usually had a co-owned AM station to pay the bills. It was clearly KOXR that kept KPMJ on the air in Oxnard. Finally, the FCC recognized that the new medium was not financially viable and allowed co-owned stations to "simulcast." This allowed the broadcaster to incur the overhead expense of just one station and transmit it simultaneously on both AM and FM.



*HARRY PALOMINO OF KOXR
THE FIRST HISPANIC DISC JOCKEY
IN VENTURA COUNTY*



RADIO TODAY —FRANK HAINES OF KVEN

Ventura County broadcast veteran Frank Haines has been with KVEN continuously since 1952.

It was four years before another FM station showed up in Ventura County. In 1962, KVEN added KVEN-FM and later that year KBBQ (formerly KVVC) added a sister-station, KBBY. These stations also struggled to pay their way for years, but the broadcasters who grabbed those early high power assignments would benefit years later from their far-sightedness.

It was not until the mid-sixties, when stereophonic sound was added, that the FM medium started to catch on. All of a sudden the radios nobody wanted were a hot item. With two speakers attached, you could hear the music just as though you were in a concert hall. Stereo was the savior of FM.

In the seventies and eighties, many more stations came on the air in Ventura County. Most of them were FM because the AM band was just about filled up in Southern California. Over that same period of time, FM listening surpassed that of the original AM band. By 1984 KACY, the venerable rock and roller, had seen its ratings slip to the

point that new owners gave up those call letters and long-established image. They changed the station to a Spanish language music station with the call letters KTRO.

But then dynamic change has been a constant in the history of Ventura County radio broadcasting. As is shown in the appendix, very few stations have been consistently successful enough to have the luxury of keeping the same format and call letters through the years.

Today the financial health of local radio is excellent. Listenership to local stations is at an all-time high. Over \$10,000,000 per year is spent by advertisers to broadcast messages over our stations. In this economic climate, the value of radio stations is skyrocketing. When pioneer FM broadcaster Paul Schnieder sold his station KPMJ for \$450,000 in the mid-seventies, he was more than pleased with the profit. Today, ten years later, that station is worth more than \$6,000,000! From its shaky start in the 1920s, through its traumatic scare in the 1950s, radio in Ventura County has come a long way.

VENTURA COUNTY RADIO STATIONS

Current Call Letters	Year Licensed	City of License	Previous Call Letters	Dial Position
KOGO	1947	Ventura	KVVC KUDU KBBQ	AM 1590
KVEN	1948	Ventura	None	AM 1450
KZTR	1948	Santa Paula	KSPA KQIZ KAAP KKBZ KCZN	AM 1400
KOXR	1955	Oxnard	None	AM 910
KTRO	1958	Port Hueneme	KACY	AM 1520
KCAQ	1958	Oxnard	KOXR-FM KAAR KPMJ KACY-FM	FM 104.7
KHAY	1962	Ventura	KVEN-FM	FM 100.7

Current Call Letters	Year Licensed	City of License	Previous Call Letters	Dial Position
KBBY	1962	Ventura	None	FM 95.1
KNJO	1963	Thousand Oaks	None	FM 92.7
KMDY	1971	Thousand Oaks	KGOE	AM 850
KMYX	1972	Ojai	KOVA	FM 105.5
KZTR	1972	Camarillo	KGAB	FM 95.9
KDAR	1974	Oxnard	None	FM 98.3
KXPT	1976	Santa Paula	KAAP-AM KKBZ-FM KIEZ	FM 96.7
KCPB	1979	Thousand Oaks	None	FM 91.1
KWNK	1984	Simi Valley	None	AM 670
KMRO	1986	Camarillo	None	FM 90.3

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Floyd S. Markham, Ph.D. spent his professional life researching bacteria. Now retired, he has turned his microscope toward his fellows — initially for the Stonington-Deer Isle (Maine) Historical Society, then, the Fallbrook Historical Society (research committee) and, finally, under the auspices of the Ojai Valley Historical Society.

Dr. Markham was born in Cadillac, Michigan, received his B.S. in Medical Biology from Michigan State College, his Ph.D. in Bacteriology from the University of Chicago. As professor of bacteriology at Ohio State University and as senior research fellow with the Lederle Laboratories Division, American Cyanamid Company, Dr. Markham gathered numerous awards — notably the Ricketts Prize (1935) and the Typhus Commission Medal (1946).

BASQUES IN OUR PAST

by Floyd S. Markham

America is frequently called a melting pot and California is a state that thoroughly deserves such a designation. Our ethnic groups represent most sections of the globe; in one way or another they have made significant contributions to our history. Among the less widely known of these immigrant groups are the Basques. When we think of these people at all, it is likely to be as lonely sheepherders with their dogs. The picture is not wrong but it is very incomplete and misleading.

The home turf of the Basques consists of three provinces in southwestern France and four on the slopes of the Pyrenees and the Bay of Biscay in northeastern Spain. As a people they are considerably more aggressive than the shepherd image suggests. They are sturdy, energetic, proud and close-knit. The latter characteristic may in part be due to the fact that their language is strange and difficult to master, lacking as it is in roots common to the other European tongues.

In days past, the Basques have been great shipbuilders, sailors, whalers, and even smugglers and pirates of note. Like the British, the Basque seamen and their fellow countrymen promptly penetrated the newly discovered American continent. It is reported that the SANTA MARIA of Columbus was Basque-owned and manned. It may be recalled that during the Christmas season of 1492, the SANTA MARIA was wrecked on the shores of Hispaniola, now Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. Members of the crew of the wrecked flagship were left on the island because of the lack of space on the two remaining ships. Thus these Basque seamen became residents of the first "European colony" in the new world.

Basques in great numbers were not long in joining the migration to the western hemisphere. Indeed, the traffic to and from and across and out of Panama before the end of the 1500s reached such a point

that the Basque brothers, Francisco and Miguel Eraso, owned respectively ninety-nine and eighty-five ships there. Incidentally, the present strongman of Panama bears a good old Basque family name — Noriega. Before the middle of the 1600s, the Bishop of Santiago in Chile warned His Majesty that all the important officials in Santiago were "vizcaínos" (Basques), and that they were cheating him of his just revenues from the traders.

The saintly founders of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier, were Basque; Simón Bolívar, the liberator of South America, also belonged to this ethnic group. Philip I of Spain had a Basque as his personal chaplain and another as his secretary of state. Indeed, the Basques attained many high offices in the church, the military, the state and in trade, shipping and exploration. It was two Basques who added the Philippine Islands to the crown lands in 1564. In that same year, Francisco Ibarra incorporated the present states of Sonora and Sinaloa of Mexico into a new province, which he named Nueva Vizcaya — and Durango, its capital, he named after his birthplace in northern Spain. The Spanish possessions in Mexico and the Pacific in the early days were well covered by what was called the "Basque Network." The viceroy, the bishop, the royal treasurer, and the master of the great port of San Blas, Mexico, were all Basque.

In 1602, the viceroy sent his brother Basque, Sebastián Vizcaino, to explore the coastal region of Alta California and beyond, for Spain was already concerned about the British and Russian penetration of what Spain considered to be her rightful possessions. She needed sheltered harbors where her ships, carrying treasures from Manila and Canton, could get fresh food and water. Returning by that seemingly roundabout route was attractive because of its more favorable currents and winds. On his way north, Vizcaino stopped at Miguel Harbor and renamed it as we know it today — San Diego. Farther north, he passed through and named the Santa Barbara Channel.

Many years elapsed before Spain made a serious effort to colonize Alta California. First, the missionaries were sent to civilize and Christianize the Indians attracted to the mission centers. Small numbers of soldiers accompanied the padres for protection. It was

in 1769 that Father Junípero Serra arrived to undertake the task of bringing western civilization to Alta California.

Father Serra's arrival on April 29 marked the end of a very hectic voyage, a voyage which had started nearly four months earlier from La Paz in Baja California. But Captain Manuel de Ayala and his good ship SAN CARLOS had been buffeted by severe storms and blown several hundred miles to the south and far off course. Supplies ran short and many of his passengers died of scurvy.

One of Father Serra's companions was Father Juan Vizcaino, a Basque, and he was joined in Alta California by four more ethnic brothers, Fathers Amurrio, Mugártagui, Prestamero, and de Lasuén. These Basque padres were associated with the first links in the chain of missions that punctuated the Camino Real. Father Fermín Francisco de Lasuén succeeded Father Serra as the President of the California missions and, like Father Serra, was much beloved. Indeed, his reputation was such that Captain George Vancouver named two landmarks for him: Point Fermín and Point Lasuén, both near San Pedro Bay.

Mission San Buenaventura was founded by Father Serra in 1782; four years later, in 1786, Mission Santa Barbara was founded by Father Lasuén. It was Father Lasuén who supervised the early construction of both of these two missions, however, for Father Serra's death occurred in 1783. In recognition of this contribution, Father Lasuén's statue now stands in a niche in the facade of the old Washington Hotel in Ventura, gazing down in wonder at the Main Street traffic.

Another Basque who left his mark on California was Juan Bautista Anza. Because of his successful campaigns in Indian fighting, he was selected by his brother Basque, the viceroy, to guide a large group of colonists from the Colorado River to settle and secure Spain's holdings in Alta California. Anza's route in the desert has been marked by the Anza-Borrego community in Imperial County. Up out of the desert, Anza headed for the San Gabriel Mission, where he picked up the Camino Real and took his party on northward via San Buenaventura and Santa Barbara to the San Francisco Bay

area, where he arrived in January of 1776. Not only were there no losses on the trip, there was one addition — a baby, added to the family of one of the colonists.

Year by year, as the number of occupied locations in Alta California increased, the traffic out of the Pacific port of San Blas in Mexico increased as well. Ships were needed to supply both the troops at the presidios and the residents at the missions. Some of the trips went as far north as Alaska. One such included an officer named Juan Francisco de la Bodega, a Basque whose name persists as the place-name of a small port just north of San Francisco Bay. His fellow countryman, Felipe Geycochea, became military commander of the presidio in Santa Barbara and subsequently Governor of Baja California.

It is worthy of note that from 1792 until Mexico gained its independence from Spain, some thirty years later, all the governors of Alta California bore Basque family names, although some of them may have been born in Mexico. Even Emperor Iturbide, who ruled briefly after Mexico's liberation, was of Basque extraction. Of the ten men who governed California during the Mexican administration, at least four bore Basque names.

It was also under Mexican administration that the great tracts of land were granted to the special friends of the governors. The secularization of the church and mission properties made vast amounts of land available for distribution. In Ventura County, for example, of twenty grants, twelve were for 10,000 acres; five were for 40,000; and one was for 100,000 acres. In San Luis Obispo County, some 71,000 acres were patented to the children of Cesareo Lataillade, a French Basque from St. Jean de Luz, the old pirate hideout. Usually no part of these vast ranchos was under cultivation. The Californios, or Spanish-Mexican residents, depended almost entirely for materials, except meat, upon supplies from Mexico. To support themselves, they sold hides and tallow obtained from their cattle.

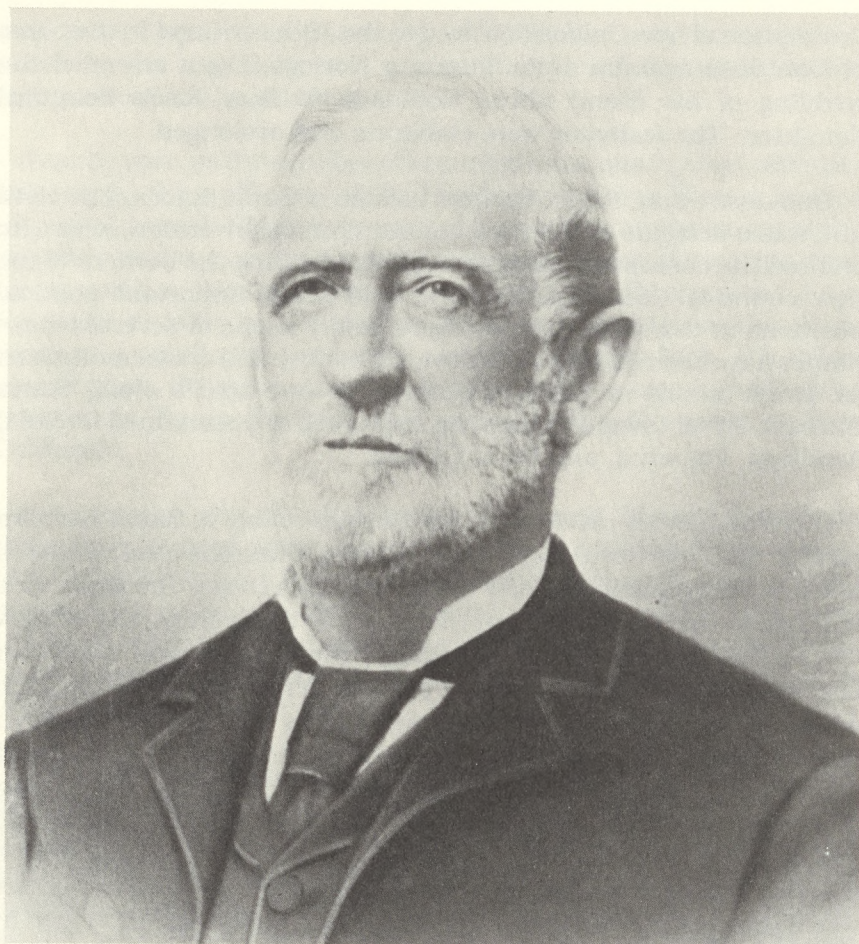
Life for these landed families in Alta California was relatively easy and gracious. The traveler was always welcome and assured of a meal, a bed, and a fresh mount to replace his jaded horse wherever he stopped. In Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast*, there is a lively

description of how Californios lived in the 19th century. In the home of Don José Antonio de la Guerra y Noriega, Dana attended the wedding of his friend Alfred Robinson to Don José's beautiful daughter. The festivities were elaborate and prolonged.

Don José's son, Pablo, became alcalde of Santa Barbara in 1847 and was a delegate to the state constitutional convention, where he chaired the committee charged with determining the borders of the new counties. Subsequently, he held many important political positions in the state. This Basque family is one of several whose names have been distinguished in local history and are memorialized as street names in Santa Barbara. As one strolls along Santa Barbara Street toward the sea, he sees cross streets named for Sola, Arrellaga, Figueroa, and De la Guerra.

There were other residents in the Basque colony in Santa Barbara as well. One was Don José Antonio Aguirre, a wealthy merchant with one foot in Santa Barbara and the other in San Diego. His ships were engaged in the Manila-Canton trade; one of these ships, the JOVEN GUIPUZCOANA, in 1840 transported the English and American prisoners taken for illegal entry into the territory — the "Graham Affair" — to Mexico. With three Americans and another Basque, Miguel Pedorena, San Diego delegate to the state constitutional convention, Aguirre shared ownership of most of the land upon which the city of San Diego developed. Don José's home in San Diego was adjacent to that of the Estudillos, two of whose daughters he married successively. His marriage to the second Estudillo daughter was described in Alfred Robinson's *Life in California*, published in 1846.

When Ulpiano Indart left his home in Fuenterrabia on the Bay of Biscay near the French border, he first went to Mexico. There he worked for a few years in a commercial house until the news of the gold rush attracted him to California. Unlike many forty-niners, he had no problem with transportation. Uncle José Domingo Indart was the owner and captain of the KEONEANA, and that ship brought Ulpiano to San Pedro harbor in 1850. After five years of commercial activity in Los Angeles, he liquidated his business and purchased Rancho Nojoqui in Santa Barbara County. This he stocked with cattle and soon settled down to domestic life with Feliciano Indart



DON JOSÉ JOAQUÍN DE ARNAZ

whom he married at Mission Santa Ynez. Felicianita was the daughter of Ulpiano's Uncle Joseph Domingo.

In 1864, Ulpiano was elected county treasurer and later a member of the town council. When the town was incorporated, he became the city tax collector. After the death of Felicianita, he married María Antonia de la Guerra, the widow of Cesareo Lataillade of San Luis Obispo. Indart was still a very active and respected member of the community when he died in 1902.



PABLO AYALA

While Señor J. M. Andonaequi did not marry his own cousin, as did Ulpiano Indart, like him he married within his own ethnic group, a common practice among the close-knit Basques. Andonaequi and Indart came originally from the same area in northern Spain. Born in 1825, Andonaequi first migrated to Argentina where he worked as a tailor for several years. In 1845, he took Estefania Etchevería as a bride and immigrated to the gold fields of California. Shortly after, however, he returned to San Francisco as a tailor. In 1854, he came to Santa Barbara, where he combined tailoring and a mercantile business. He prospered and built substantially on the properties he acquired there.

One of the most interesting and important leaders of the early community north of the border was Don José Joaquín de Arnaz. Don José came from Santander on the Bay of Biscay, only a few miles west of the westernmost Basque province. Natives of this area shared most of the characteristics of the Basques and were commonly found with them in the new world communities.

Arnaz was educated in Spain and had graduated in medicine before coming to South America. For a time, he was a supercargo on one of the trading ships of Virmond, operating out of Lima, Peru. As such, he became familiar with the California coast as far north as San Francisco Bay where he once owned Goat Island. His memoirs, now in the manuscript collection at the University of California at Berkeley, are a fine source of information about the old Californios, their interests and activities in the days before the gold rush. Arnaz chose to live in San Buenaventura and when the missions were secularized, he was designated by the government to oversee the mission and its neophytes.

Governor Pío Pico, perhaps anticipating events to come, soon set about disposing of the vast lands assigned to the missions — usually to the great advantage of himself and his friends. In 1845, Arnaz and Botello were first allowed to lease the mission for nine years at the rate of \$1,630 per year. It was in 1845 also that Don José took Mercedes Avila, the daughter of one of the old and respected families, to wife. The newlyweds established a home near the mouth of the Ventura River. In June of 1846, Governor Pío Pico sold Arnaz the 48,800-acre Rancho Ex-San Buenaventura Mission for \$12,000.

Shortly after Christmas, this domestic scene was interrupted by the arrival of Captain John C. Frémont; Frémont had just experienced a most difficult trip through the mountains of the Santa Barbara back country attempting to avoid an ambush. He was on his way to Los Angeles and needed to replace the horses and mules he had lost on the bypass. Arnaz provided him with the animals for which Frémont paid with an I.O.U., the I.O.U. to be paid by the United States government. Arnaz was never paid this obligation.

Soon after Frémont's visit, a detachment of the New York volunteers, recently arrived in Santa Barbara, descended on Don José Arnaz

and demanded the keys to the mission. Possibly the men had heard stories of gold and silver treasure buried in there. Arnaz refused to betray his trust and suffered the plundering of his home and goods; he was nearly hanged in his own orchard. In an attempt to repair the financial ruin created by this raid, Don José joined the forty-niners in *their* search for treasure. In short order, he was operating a miner's supply store in Stockton; his success there enabled him to return to San Buenaventura, his lands and family.

Even before the raid on his home in the winter of 1846, Arnaz had advertised in eastern journals that he would give free building sites to settlers in his chosen community. Now he built a tannery where some of the hides from his wild cattle could be converted into much-needed leather. He also built a flour mill to process local grain. Imported flour at the time cost from \$25-\$35 per barrel, the value of half-a-dozen horses. As for his medical degree, Arnaz readily treated his friends and neighbors without charge when they were ill. In the smallpox epidemic of 1862, he vaccinated scores of people in a wide area of Southern California. He was described as San Buenaventura's most progressive citizen.

In 1874, when H. H. Bancroft was collecting material for his *History of California*, Bancroft visited Don José de Arnaz in his Rancho Santa Ana home, now just off Route 33 where the Rancho Arnaz fruit stand is located. Bancroft refers to a "genial man of fifty-four" from whom he received 100 pages of interesting *Recuerdos*.

Closely associated with Don José de Arnaz was another old Basque family, the Ayalas. José Calisto Ayala was one of the soldiers who accompanied Father Serra northward along the Camino Real to Santa Barbara. Faithful service at the presidio in Santa Barbara brought Ayala, as it did other veterans, a grant of land. It was doubtless on this land that Joaquin Lugo de Ayala, in 1842, planted Santa Barbara's eventually outsized grapevine. The marriage of José Calisto Ayala and Juana Vitala Feliz was the first one performed in the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows, the first Catholic church in Santa Barbara. The date was December 8, 1786.

The biblical injunction — "increase and multiply" — was taken seriously by this family. When in 1837, Governor Alvarado granted Rancho Santa Ana to Cosmé and Pablo Vanegas, the joint-grantees

were Crisogono and ten additional Ayalas! A glance at the present Ventura County telephone directory shows more than sixty listings under this family name, over half of them in the Oxnard area where Antone R. Ayala had a large and productive ranch one generation ago. (José Calisto Ayala may have had an assist or two in the generation of this family; Juan, Pedro, and Luciano Ayala indicated California as their destination when they received passports in Valparaiso, Chile on June 2, 1849.)

One of José Calisto Ayala's descendants, Ramón, became an important figure in the community. As majordomo of Santa Cruz Island for some twenty years, he governed a vast estate that included tens of thousands of cattle and sheep. His son, Pablo Ayala, was for many years chief deputy under Ventura County sheriffs Ed McMartin and Robert E. Clark.

The names and brief stories assembled here have been gathered from the sources listed below. The prime source, however, was Douglas and Bilbao's *Amerikanauk*, published by the University of Nevada Press in 1975. It lists more than 125 names of Basques whose activities were of such consequence as to justify their being listed in various California county histories. There were obviously many others whose life style, either rural or urban, left them in comfortable obscurity.

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The Basque Collection at the Foster Library

From the Editor: Mr. Markham's "Basques in our Past" is an excellent introduction to the story of the Basques in Ventura County. Additional information comes from the transcription of an interview of Elizabeth Topping, for many years the librarian at Foster Library (Main Branch, Ventura County Library), conducted by none other than Jane Smith of KVVC/KVEN.

Miss Topping: "There are many Basques in our county of Ventura. They come from the North of Spain and the Southwest part of France....

"The pact of Munich was the death warrant of the Basques, as well as that of the Spanish Republic. ... The President of the Basques, José Antonio de Aquirre, has this to say:

We received aid from Basques all over the world. There were homes which always could make room for one more family. There was a loaf of bread which could be broken forty times more if necessary. Whatever we had, each Basque who went into France knew that he would share with us equally. It was our pledge, our creed. These defenders of democracy with all their defects and all their mistakes were still an advance guard of liberty. But there was still the Non-intervention Committee, the Munich Pact, the arms embargo. In Paris, London, Washington, silence reigned.

"On June 1, 1940, the Germans entered La Panne, and Monsieur de Aguirre had to plan what he should do. He said that it was a Basque characteristic when everyone was going one way to go the other, so go he did, and how do you think he escaped? He went the other way. That man with his family escaped by going east through Berlin. And they got away with it.

"Now I would like to read the little sample of Basque poetry I found:

*The waters of the sea are vast,
and their bottom cannot be seen;
But over them I will pass,
that I may behold my love.*

Jane: "How did you happen to get such a collection of books on the Basques? Tell me the whole story."

Miss Topping: "This is how Jane. We had a good friend in one of the residents of Ventura County, Mrs. Ella Mack. She left us her own books and at her death the sum of a thousand dollars was given to the library by her brother, George Farrand. He gave the money freely to be used for books to belong to the City of San Buenaventura, but also to be used by the whole county. He made only one simple request — that the library collect books written in English about the Basques because he and Mrs. Mack were Basques.

That is how we came to have this book I mentioned and many other beautiful ones about the Basque country, Basque homes, customs, folklore and we are making a collection of the names of the Basque people in the county....One thing you will notice about the people that bear these names are the fine mountaineer qualities of courage, independence, honesty, simplicity and faith in their religion they possess, besides the lovely gift of song."

Below is the list compiled by Miss Topping; it will serve as a starting point for the second chapter of the story of the Basques of Ventura County.

Amiamo
Amorena
Añorga
Antchagno
Asparren
Bidondo
Borotra
Burucoa
Canet
D'Eceta
Dufau
Erburu
Erramuspe
Erro
Etcheverry
Ezpunda

Farrand
Gastambide
Goiti
Juanche
Juaregui
Lacabe
Lacunza
Larramendy
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Lihista
Petrou
Uharriet
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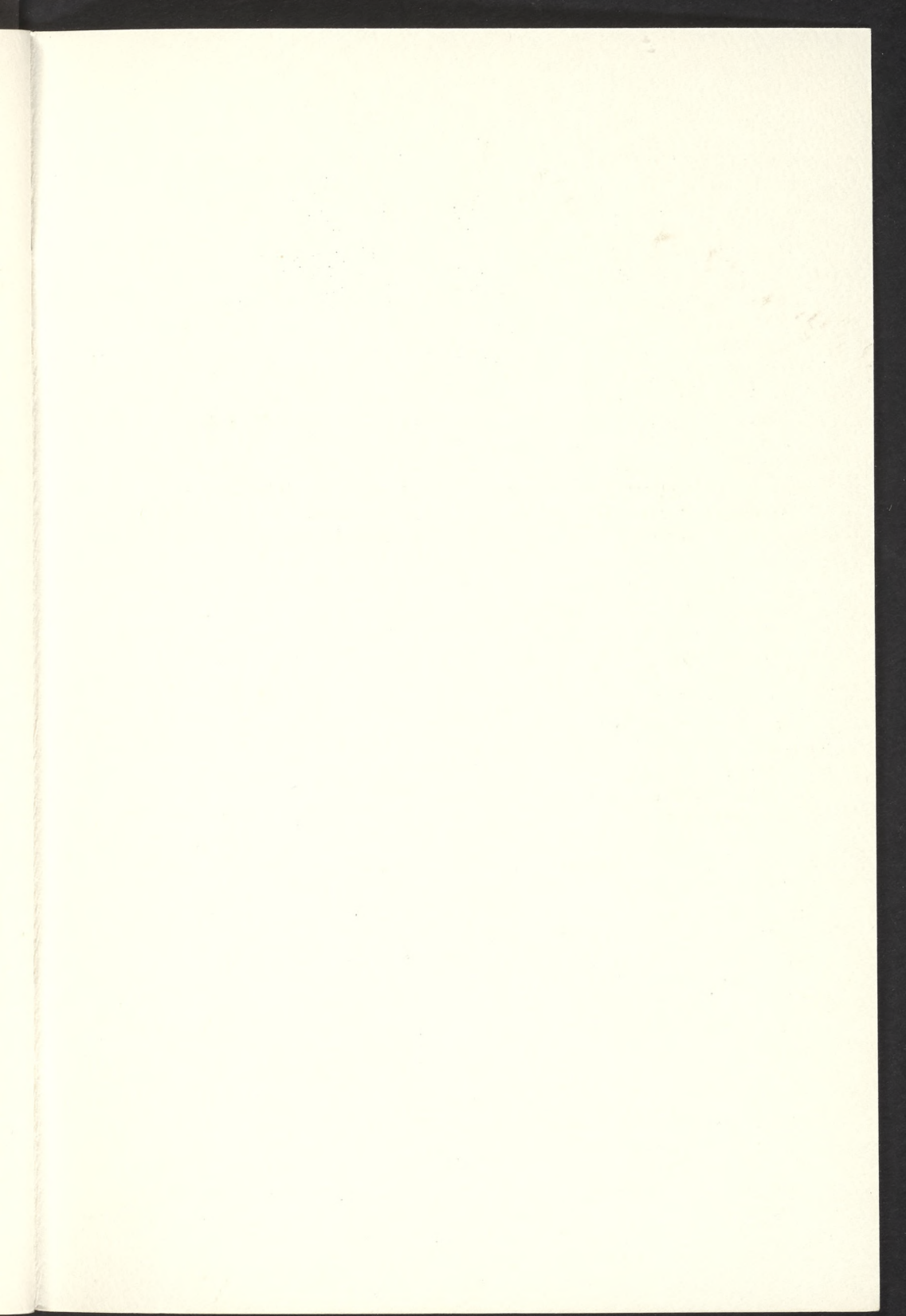
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